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Harrowdean; the big drum thundered at the Irish politicians, and all the violins bewailed the intellectual laxity of the university system. Meanwhile the trumpets prophesied wars and disasters, the cymbals ever and again inserted a clashing jar about the fatal delay in automobile insurance, while the triangle broke into a plangent solo on the topic of a certain rotten gate-post he always forgot in the daytime, and how in consequence the cows from the glebe farm got into the garden and ate Mrs. Britling's carnations." The whole of Mr. Britling's soliloquy is a wonderful piece of work: there is so much of the bigness and the littleness, the absurdity and the earnestness of humanity in it.

War comes and brings its shocks, and its griefs, and its disillusionments to Mr. Britling and his circle. It seems to wreck everything; it makes intellectual and emotional havoc. Mr. Britling, however, sees it through.

The conclusion of the story affords a kind of companion piece to the soliloquy. This is the letter which Mr. Britling writes to the parents of the funny, lovable German boy who lived as a tutor in Mr. Britling's family, until the war broke out, and then went to the front, to be shot somewhere on the Russian line of battle. In this much re-written letter, impersonal feeling triumphs. Later, Mr. Britling comes to a new knowledge of religion and of God. He is able to conceive of a God who is not responsible for all the ills of humanity, of a God who is close and real. The conclusion may not be wholly sound as philosophy, but as the climax of a sequence of emotions and experiences it is convincing and heartening. It seems to embody the meaning that the war has for the personal life.

MULTITUDE AND SOLITUDE. By JOHN MASEFIELD. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916.

Mr. Masefield's novel, *Multitude and Solitude*, first printed a good many years ago and now republished, will be read by a great many persons on the strength of the author's subsequently acquired reputation. It deserves to be read, not because it is at all what is ordinarily meant by a "poet's novel," but because it is a remarkably good story. One does not need to be a lover of Masefield's poetry in order to enjoy *Multitude and Solitude*: to enjoy it, one needs only to care for clean construction, clear narrative, and intense style in fiction.

The central figure of the story is a young playwright who, having become dissatisfied with art, and life, and love, finds a new gospel in science and service. With a scientist of his own age, who has recovered from an attack of sleeping-sickness by the use of a new drug, he goes to Africa to combat the deadly disease. The African experience has plenty of strangeness, of a good wholesome imaginative and realistic sort; and the plot takes a clever Jules Verne-ish

turn, when the hero, against all expectation and after apparent failure, discovers an antitoxin for the trypanosome and saves his companion's life. On their return to the coast, the two men learn that their discovery has been anticipated, but they have gained in character enough to repay them for their struggles and sufferings.

The shortcoming of Mr. Masefield's story is not that it tries to be too poetic for a good yarn, but that its thought is a little tentative, a little experimental: one doubts that what it seems ultimately to say is the author's real or final thought. The theory that religion is scientific service seems banal as the conclusion of a story that shows marks of genius in the writing.

Nevertheless the greatest value of the novel lies in its clear, intense expression of the thoughts and feelings connected with really fundamental things—art, love, religion, science, work.

WINDY MCPHERSON'S SON. By SHERWOOD ANDERSON. New York: John Lane Company, 1916.

There is such a thing as thinking intensely and penetratingly, though with imperfect insight, about the fundamental things of life; and there is such a thing as merely getting very much excited about them. This latter is the besetting fault of the new romance—the romance that combines the truth and frankness of realism with the restless, questing, romantic spirit.

Sherwood Anderson's story, *Windy McPherson's Son*, is arousing in its ruthlessly clear and crudely colorful picturing of life; it is to be valued for its frankness, its straight, unconventional thinking; it can hardly fail to turn the reader's mind to the reconsideration of important, if sometimes depressing, facts of the inner and of the outer life. And yet the story leaves the impression, not that it is a duty to think straight and to pierce through the veils of convention and prudery, but that life is a heady liquor of which it is wise to drink deeply. That you *may* drink deeply, if only you remain honest with yourself and think things out independently—this is the ethics of the thing, a kind of ethics that appeals powerfully to the young and to the adventurous.

Samuel McPherson, the son of a drunken and boastful old veteran of the Civil War, who lives in a little Iowa village, early begins to hate shams, and resolves to make a success of his life. His mind is prematurely stimulated by the older men with whom he associates and he is led to reflect and to feel strongly about such matters as religion and literature and sex and wealth and character. Eventually, determining to follow his strongest bent, he becomes a money-maker. Sam succeeds; he becomes one of the conspicuous financiers of a period of spectacular financiers. He marries a woman who desires children above all else. The two plan a life which might have saved